



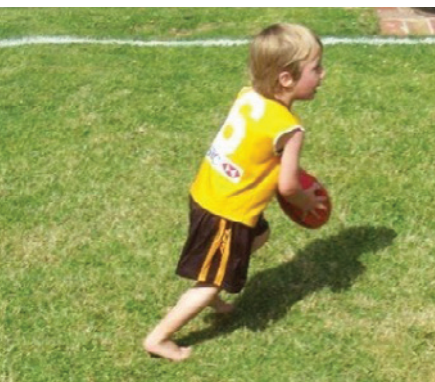
ERFC NEWS
Story by Paul Fenton



Talented East Ringwood Football Club Junior Judson “Juddy” Clarke has put together a stellar year, and given himself a great opportunity to start his AFL dream.

Judson played 2021 with the Dandenong Stingrays - (NAB League U19s team) and Yarra Vally Grammar School team – (AGSV competition) and also represented U18 Victorian Country team.

I recently caught up with Judson and he shared some early East Ringwood Junior Club experiences and we discussed his chances of been selected in the 2021 – NAB AFL Draft, Nov 24-25.



Go Juddy go!



Hawthorn meet the players day – Sam Mitchell always a favourite.

Son of passionate ERFC star Jarrod (Jabba) Clarke, Judson was always a busy kid with infinite amounts of energy. He would spend hours climbing trees, shooting hoops, hitting golf balls and of course kicking the footy in his “Mighty Hawks” jumper. Very nimble on his feet, a sometimes cheeky young Judson was hard to catch!

I asked Judson about his best childhood footy memories. He said, *“I just loved racing around the backyard kicking goals, and on Saturday morning Auskick was always a highlight. I was very lucky, East Ringwood is an awesome Junior Club, Ainslie Park has a great surface to train and play, plus there was always plenty of football’s at training and lots of parents keen to be involved.*

I remember helping Dad cook sausages on our special Junior awards nights... who doesn’t love a snag and sauce with your mates.”



EFNL U14 Rep players (2018), East Ringwood – left Adam Pica, Sahaf Ali, Judson Clarke and Zac Cilecekan.

“On Saturdays I would head up with mates and watch the East Ringwood Seniors play, we knew many of the players as they were always coming down to help out with Junior training, I remember running behind James Belo (current Senior player co-captain) and watching him kick a goal from the centre of Ainslie and thinking, Wow, I might not be able to kick that far, but I’m sure with a few bounces and side steps I can get close!”

Winning the ERJFC U13A’s flag was certainly a highlight for Judson. His lightning speed, unique goal sense and silky skills made him a real stand out. A photo Judson really cherishes shows him pictured with team mates Adam Pica, Sahaf Ali and Zac Cilecekan who were all selected in the under 14 Eastern Football Netball Inter-League team in 2017. **“All the boys continue to work extremely hard at their footy, hopefully we can reunite at East Ringwood one day!”** Judson said.

Judson went on to captain the U15 team in 2018 and win the best and fairest award Judson was developing strong leadership skills on and off the ground. He also played all three games for Vic Country in the 2019 under 16’s championship. Judson’s three-goal game against carnival winners, Vic Metro showing recruiters he was a player to keep an eye on.

A serious knee injury late in 2019 and Covid-19 made for a very different 2020 for Judson. He made the decision while in rehabilitation to work extremely hard and get his fitness back, completing extra sessions where possible and also focus on his core and upper body strength. At the time of his injury Judson had been flat-out training and playing footy all over Victoria, plus managing his school commitments – for the first time in a while Judson was forced to slow down.

While Judson was unable to play himself, he said, **“The Stingrays were very supportive and got me involved in plenty of activities – pre-season training drills, organising team events and analysing opposition players on match day. I gained a much better understanding about what I really wanted to achieve out of my footy and are more determined than ever to play at the highest level”.**

Judson currently weighs 70kg and stands at 180cm and still growing. His forward work has been a highlight and exciting to watch this year. In a mid-season Vic Country trial game against Vic Metro Judson was brilliant, kicking five goals and again catching the eye of recruiters.

In a recent NAB website story Judson was described as;

“A speedy forward, one of the AFL drafts best crumbers with his speed, agility, and kicking both to targets inside 50 and finishing around goal his greatest strengths. With the way he can take on the game and how damaging he is by foot, he’s also viable for consideration as a rebounding defender.”

I asked Judson had he seen the recent footy articles discussing his draft chances?

He said **“Yes, there is always plenty of hype leading in the AFL draft, I’m one of many eager hopefuls. All I can do is focus on things I can control, I’m currently training with the other Stingray draft boys to keep my fitness up – I was really happy with my NAB trial results – 20m Sprint 2.95 sec, Agility 7.99 sec & 2km 6.19 min.”**

Some of Judson’s other highlights this year include; making U19’s **NAB league “Team of the year”** (half forward), winning the Yarra Valley Grammar School firsts best and fairest award and been deputy vice captain for the Stingrays.

Our army of East Ringwood Football Club supporters look on with excitement as the NAB AFL draft draws near. It’s determination and strong character that will take Judson far.

All the best Juddy, we will all be tuning in to watch the first round of the **2021 NAB AFL Draft at 7.10pm AEDT on Wednesday, November 24.**

